



**CITY OF SUNNYVALE
REPORT
Heritage Preservation Commission**

October 5, 2005

SUBJECT: **2005-0845** – Mehrdad Rahbar (Applicant/Owner):
Application on a 8,367 square foot site located at **199 North
Sunnyvale Avenue** (near E. California Avenue) in an R-2
(Low-Medium Density Residential) Zoning District. (APN:
204-49-001)

Motion **Resource Allocation Permit** to consider the potential
historic significance of a single family home which is listed
as part of the Sunnyvale Heritage Resources Inventory.

REPORT IN BRIEF

Existing Site Single-family home
Conditions

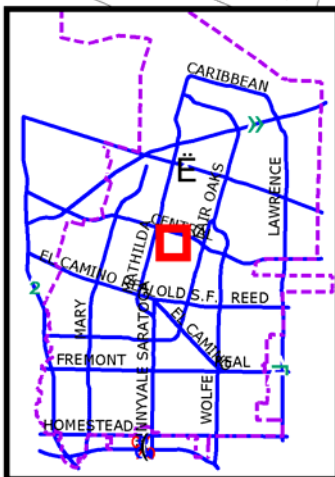
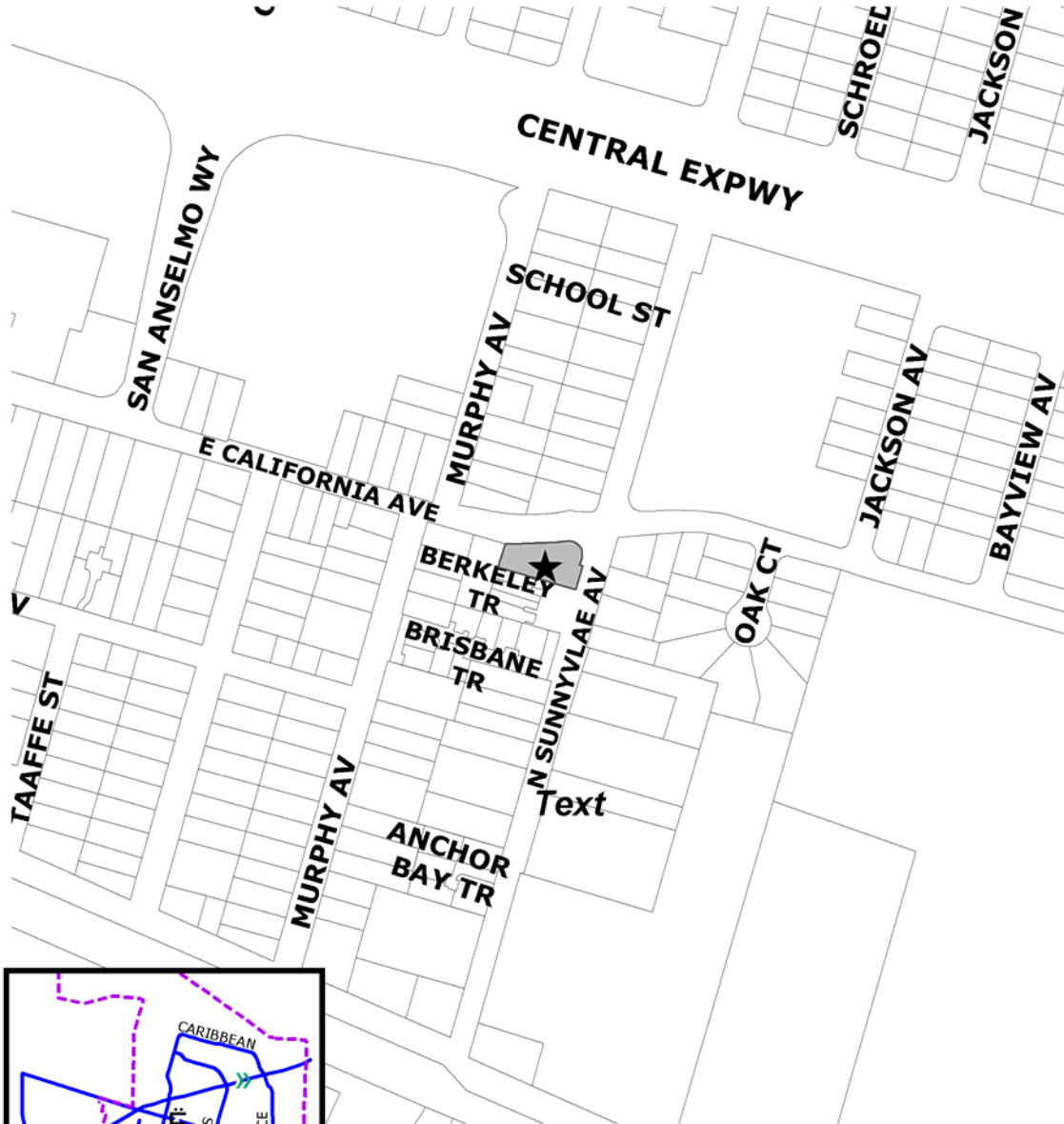
Surrounding Land Uses

North	Single-Family Residential
South	Multi-Family Residential
East	Single-Family Residential
West	Single-Family Residential

Issues Historic Significance of the single-family home

Environmental Environmental review will be conducted as required
Status by California Environmental Quality Act provisions
and City Guidelines upon determination of
significance by the Heritage Preservation
Commission.

Staff Determine that the single-family residence does not
Recommendation have historic significance and propose removal from
the City Heritage Resource Inventory.



**Resource Allocation Permit
199 N Sunnvyale Avenue**

0 170 340 680 Feet



ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting a determination from the Heritage Preservation Commission in regards to the local historical significance of the subject property. Staff is requesting a determination from the Heritage Preservation Commission in regards to the local historical significance of the home in order to conduct appropriate environmental review.

Background

Previous Actions on the Site: The following table summarizes previous planning applications related to the subject site.

File Number	Brief Description	Hearing/Decision	Date
1982-0003	General Plan Amendment from Low Density Residential to Low-Medium Density Residential	City Council / Approved	2/2/82
1982-0002	Rezone the site from R-0 to R2-PD	City Council / Approved	2/9/82

The Sunnyvale Municipal Code contains requirements for any project that proposes construction, demolition, relocation or material changes to historic resources. The property is listed as part of the Sunnyvale Heritage Resource Inventory.

A historic evaluation was prepared by Archaeological Resource Management in July 2005 (Attachment A). The report concluded that the single-family home did not meet any requirements for being listed in the National or California Register of Historical Resources. The report did determine the site to be of limited local historic importance.

Environmental Review

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), any application that may cause a substantial adverse change to a Heritage resource is subject to environmental review. Since the application proposes to demolish the existing structures, there would be substantial and potentially adverse change if the structures are considered historic. CEQA statute states the following:

“§ 21084.1, Historical Resource: A project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a

project that may have a significant effect on the environment. For purposes of this section, a historical resource is a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources. Historical resources included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5050.1, or deemed significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (g) of Section 5024.1, are presumed to be historically or culturally significant for purposes of this section, unless the preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that the resource is not historically or culturally significant. The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources, not included in a local register of historical resources, or not deemed significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (g) of Section 5024.1 shall not preclude a lead agency from determining whether the resource may be an historical resource for purposes of this section.”

Generally when projects such as this are reviewed by local agencies, a historical and architectural evaluation is requested which determines the historical significance of the structure at the National, State, and local levels. This report is used as “the preponderance of evidence” as stated in the statute. In this case, the report for the residence at 199 North Sunnyvale Avenue determined that the single-family home is not eligible to be listed on the National and State registries of historic resources. The report also concludes that the single-family home is a resource of limited local historic importance, and is currently part of the City’s Heritage Resource Inventory.

Required HPC Determination

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing home and redevelop the site. At this hearing, staff is requesting a determination from the Heritage Preservation Commission regarding the local significance of the project site so that the appropriate level of environmental review can be conducted for this project. If the Commission determines that the structures have local historic significance, then an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) would be required to be prepared. If the Commission determines that the structures do not have local historic significance, a Negative Declaration would be prepared and the proposed project would proceed forward to the Planning Commission.

An EIR would require approximately 6 months additional time to complete. The EIR would explore alternatives to the demolition of the structure and require greater public notice regarding the potential impact to the property. The intent of the report is to provide information regarding the residence and disclose all impacts that the project demolition and construction of new structures may create.

Historic Preservation Policies

In order to determine any local historic significance, Heritage Commissioners should draw from four sources of information. The first source is the City's Heritage Resource Inventory which states the significance of the property is in part due to its original ownership by the Raines family. Otis Raines owned the first Chevrolet dealership in the County and he was also Mayor of Sunnyvale in 1946 (Attachment B).

The second source of information is the historic and architectural evaluation provided by Archives & Architecture Heritage Resource Partners in Attachment A. The report identifies facts about the home and provides criteria that may qualify it for local significance. The report states the following:

"This structure, built in 1931, was the home of Otis B. Raines and Nadine Raines. Otis Raines was the owner of Raines Chevrolet, as well as serving as one time Mayor of Sunnyvale".

The report concluded that the site is a resource of limited local historic importance. However, the report concludes that the project could not be eligible for the National or California Registers. The report states the following:

"The structure is not associated with any known significant historical events. The structure is associated with Otis B. Raines, who can be considered a locally prominent businessperson within the Sunnyvale area. However, this association does not appear sufficient for the structure to qualify as potentially eligible...The structure is constructed in the Spanish Eclectic style of domestic architecture, yet it is not particularly fine or unusual example of this style".

"The structure is not associated with significant historic events...is built in the Spanish Eclectic style. However it does not appear to be a significant enough example of this style to qualify for inclusion in the National Register. In addition, the structure does not appear to be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history"(Attachment A.)

The third source to consider is the Images Sunnyvale's Historical Resources, prepared by the California History Center, published by the City of Sunnyvale in 1988. This book provides information, a picture about the site, and the significance of the property. The book makes note of Mr. Raines and mentions some of the architectural features of the building (Attachment C).

The fourth resource to use in making a decision is the City's Municipal Code, Title 19 (Zoning Ordinance) which provides the criteria for nomination of a City

Heritage resource. Criteria for evaluation and nomination of heritage resources in Section 19.96.050 of Title 19 state the following:

“Any improvement, building, portion of buildings, structures, signs, features, sites, scenic areas, views, vistas, places, areas, landscapes, trees, or other natural objects or objects of scientific, aesthetic, educational, political, social, cultural, architectural, or historical significance can be designated a heritage resource by the city council and any area within the city may be designated a heritage resource district by the city council pursuant to provisions of this chapter if it meets the Criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, or one or more of the following:

- (a) It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city’s cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic engineering, architectural, or natural history;*
- (b) It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history;*
- (c) It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;*
- (d) It is representative of the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect;*
- (e) It contributes to the significance of an historic area, being a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of historic or scenic properties or thematically related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically or by plan or physical development;*
- (f) It has a unique location or singular physical characteristic or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the city of Sunnyvale;*
- (g) It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represents a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation;*
- (h) It is similar to other distinctive properties, sites, areas, or objects based on a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;*
- (i) It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning;*
- (j) It is one of the few remaining examples in the city, region, state, or nation possessing distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or historic type or specimen;*
- (k) With respect to a local landmark, it is significant in that the resource materially benefits the historical character of a neighborhood or area, or the resource in its location represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community or city.*

(l) With respect to a local landmark district, a collective high integrity of the district is essential to the sustained value of the separate individual resources;

(m) With respect to a designated landmark and designated landmark district, the heritage resource shall meet Criteria of the National Register of Historical Places, which are incorporated by reference into this chapter. (Ord. 2623-99 § 1 (part); prior zoning code § 19.80.060)."

Fiscal Impact

No fiscal impacts other than normal fees and taxes are expected.

Conclusion

Staff has reviewed all four sources of information and has concluded that the single-family home should be removed from the Heritage Resource Inventory. Staff makes this recommendation on the basis that the building does not have the necessary historical and architectural importance and condition required to meet the City criteria for a Heritage Resource. In addition, while the home was originally part of a row of homes along Sunnyvale Avenue, that together represented an architectural style of a particular era, over the years, the area has been degraded due to loss of other structures that contributed to the site. This reduced the overall significance of the home to the overall site.

Lastly, the original homeowner did have some local historical importance, however, staff determined that he did not have a significant impact on the City's history to warrant Heritage Resource status.

Staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission determine that the single-family home does not meet the criteria for a Heritage Resource as identified in Section 19.96.050 of the zoning ordinance.

Alternatives

1. Determine that the single family home does have local historic significance.
2. Determine that the single family home does not have local historic significance.

Recommendation

Alternative 2.

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Project Planner

Reviewed by:

Gerri Caruso
Principal Planner

Attachments:

- A. Historic and Architectural Evaluation
- B. Cultural Resource Inventory – 199 North Sunnyvale Avenue
- C. Images of Sunnyvale Cultural Resources